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THE FAMILY MEETING.

BY CHARLES SPRAGUE.

We are all here,
Father, mother,
Sister, brother,
All who hold each other dear,
Each chair is filled—'ere all at home!
To night let no cold stranger come:
It is not after this around
Our old familiar hearth we're found.
Bless, then, the meeting and the spot;
For once be every care forgot;
Let gentle peace assert her power,
And kind affection rule the power,
We're all—all here.

We're not all—all here.
Some are away—the dead ones dear,
Whom thronged with us this ancient hearth,
And gave the hour to guileless mirth.
Fate with a stern, relentless hand,
Looked on, and thinned our little band;
Some like a night passed away,
And some sat lingering day by day;
The quiet grave-yard—some lie there—
And cruel ocean has his share—
We're not all here.

We are all here.
E'en they—the dead—though dead, so dear
Fond memory, to her duty true,
Brings back their faded forms to view.
How life like, through the mist of years,
Each well remembered face appears!
We see them, as in the time long past,
From each to each kind looks are cast.
We hear their words, their smiles behold,
They're round us as they were of old—
We are all here.

We are all here,
Father, mother,
Sister, brother,
You that I love with love so dear.
This may not long of us be said—
Soon must we join the gathered dead,
And by the hearth we now sit round
Some other circle will be found.
Oh! then, that wisdom may we know
Which yields a life of peace below;
So, in the world to follow this,
May each repeat in words of bliss,
We're all—all here!

THE TRUE TALE OF MACBETH.

The marvellous genius of Shakspeare may be said to have made Macbeth, for without the illustration, of what interest or value would have been the name of a semi-barbarian Scottish monarch of the eleventh century? But it has also destroyed him, for it has fixed the misrepresentation of his character on such a basis, that nothing can ever annul them. Macbeth must be the moral of murder and usurpation in his rank unto all time. Nevertheless, our curiosity is interested to know who and what this man really was, and perhaps all the more so, that our poetical conception of him is so different from the reality. It chances that on this point some new historical light has of late been thrown, which may be presumed to give additional interest to the subject; we shall, therefore, without any further remarks, proceed to give a brief account of the Macbeth of fact.

The true history of this period is for the first time related in Mr. William Skene's work of the *Highlanders of Scotland*, being compiled mainly from the Irish and Norwegian annals. It is surprising how much it differs from the meagre and semi-fabulous accounts which descended, becoming more fabulous as they went along, from our early native historians to Holinshed, who finally gave the full blown issues of marvels to Shakspeare. It appears that in the year 1034 the Scottish monarchy came to a sort of pause, on the overthrow and slaughter of a King Malcolm by a powerful Norwegian chief or Earl of Orkney, named Thorfinn. By this great warrior the northern and eastern part of Scotland were subdued as far as the Frith of Tay, but leaving, apparently, certain districts still under their native chiefs. And this division of the country by a Norwegian sway lasted thirty years, though it is a fact totally unknown among us.

The rest of the people of Scotland raised a monarch in the person of Duncan, whose mother was a daughter of the deceased Malcolm, his father being Crinan, nominally Abbot of Dunkeld, but in reality a powerful chief in the district of Athole. To pursue Mr. Skene's intelligent narration: "In personal character Duncan was far from being well fitted for the difficult situation in which he was placed; but being the only chief of the Northern Picts who remained unsubdued by the Norwegians, he was the most likely person to preserve the rest of Scotland from their grasp, during the whole reign he appears to have been unmolested by Thorfinn in his circumscribed domains. The Scots having thus enjoyed during Duncan's reign, six years of repose, began to consider their strength sufficiently recruited to attempt the recovery of the extensive territories in the north which Thorfinn had conquered.

Taking advantage, accordingly, of the temporary absence of Thorfinn who was engaged with the greater part of his Norwegian forces in English expedition, Duncan advanced towards the north of Scotland and succeeded in penetrating as far as the district of Moray, without encountering, apparently, any resistance. The Gaelic inhabitants of the north, however, who preferred remaining under the Norwegian yoke rather than to submit to a chief of their own race, whose title to the throne they could not admit, opposed his further progress, and Macbeth, the maormor of Moray, attacked him near Elgin, defeated his army, and slew the king himself. Macbeth immediately took advantage of this success, and assisted by the Norwegian forces, who still remained in the country, he overran the whole of Scotland, and speedily made himself

BY GEO. H. BEAMAN.

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Vol. 50—No 52

master of all that had remained unconquered by the Norwegians. The sons of Duncan were obliged to fly; the eldest took refuge at the Court of England, while the second fled from the vengeance of Macbeth to the Hebrides, and surrendered to Thorfinn himself. Macbeth, with the sanction, probably, of the Earl of Orkney, assumed the title of the King of Scotland, which he claimed in right of his cousin Malcolm, and notwithstanding all the efforts of the Scots, he maintained possession of the crown for a period of eight years.

"Although Macbeth was a native chief, and one of the Gaelic maormors of the north, yet his conquest can only be considered with regard to its effects as a Norwegian conquest. He had previously been tributary to that people, and it was by their assistance principally that he became King of Scotland; so that at this period we may consider the whole country as having been virtually under the domain of the Norwegians; Thorfinn himself ruled over the northern districts, while with his concurrence Macbeth reigned in the southern half.

"During the reign of Macbeth, the adherents of the Athole family made two several attempts to recover possession of the throne, but they were both equally unsuccessful. The first occurred in the year 1045, when Crinan, the father of Duncan, attacked Macbeth at the head of the adherents of the family in Scotland. Crinan's defeat was total, and the slaughter very great; for in the concise words of the Irish annalist, 'In that battle was slain Crinan, Abbot of Dunkeld, and many with him, namely, nine times twenty heroes.'

This defeat seems for the time to have completely extinguished Duncan's party in Scotland, and it was not till nine years afterwards that the second attempt was made. Malcolm, Duncan's eldest son, who had taken refuge in England, obtained from the English king the assistance of a Saxon army, under the command of Seward, the Earl of Northumberland; but although Seward succeeded in wresting Lothian from Macbeth and in placing Malcolm king over it, he was unable to obtain any further advantage, and Macbeth still retained the kingdom of Scotland proper while Malcolm ruled as king over Lothian, until four years afterwards, a more favorable opportunity occurred for renewing the enterprise.

The son of the king of Norway, in the course of one of the numerous practical expeditions which were undertaken by the Norwegians, had arrived at the Orkneys, and on finding the great state of power to which Thorfinn had raised himself, he proposed that they should join in undertaking an expedition having no less an object than the subjugation of the kingdom of England. To this proposal the enterprising Earl of Orkney at once acceded, and the two kings departed for the south with the whole Norwegian force which they could collect. It was not destined, however, that it should even land on the English coast, for their fleet appears to have been dispersed and almost destroyed in a tempest; such was probably at least the calamity which befel the expedition; as the words of the Irish annalist, who alone records the event, simply, 'But God was against them in that affair.'

"It appears that the king of England had no sooner become aware of the discomfiture of the threatened invasion of his territories, than he sent an English army into Scotland for the purpose of overthrowing the power of the Norwegians in that country, and of establishing Malcolm Kenmore on his father's throne; and in the absence of the Norwegians, the Saxon army was too powerful for the Gaelic force of Macbeth to withstand. The English accordingly made themselves master of the south of Scotland, and drove Macbeth as far north as Lumphannau, where he was overtaken and slain in battle. Upon the death of Macbeth, Lulach, the son of his Gilleoin, succeeded him; but after maintaining a struggle with Malcolm for the short space of three months, he was also defeated and slain at Essex, in Strathbogie.

In consequence of this defeat Malcolm Kenmore obtained, by the assistance of the English, quiet possession of the throne of Scotland, which his own power and talents enabled him to preserve during the remainder of his life. He was prevented, apparently by the return of Thorfinn, from attempting to recover any part of the northern districts which the Norwegian chief subjugated, and consequently his territories consisted only of those southern districts which Macbeth had acquired by the defeat of his father Duncan.

"From the accession of Malcolm Kenmore to the death of Thorfinn, which took place six years after, the state of Scotland remained unsettled, and the country exhibited the remarkable spectacle of a Gaelic population, one half of which obeyed the rule of a Norwegian earl, while the other half were subdued by a prince of their own race at the head of a Saxon army."

This narrative puts the idea of murder and usurpation entirely out of the question. Duncan was only an adventurer himself, slain in battle by another, who, it now appears, had pretensions to the throne according to the Celtic mode of succession, by which the eldest collateral relative of the deceased king was always selected, passing over all hereditary claimants.

Macbeth, as we learn from George Chalmers, who investigated the history with great diligence, was by birth maormor, or chief, of Cromarty and Ross, and by marriage enjoyed the same dignity over the more important reign of Moray, which is described by Mr. Skene as almost a kingdom itself extending from sea to sea. His wife, Grouch, the widow of the former maormor of Moray and whose progeny

actually succeeded in that character, was granddaughter of a former king of Scots who had been slain by Duncan's grandfather.

Macbeth was a sort of pacha or hereditary sheriff; but it will be observed, in a district over which Duncan only aimed at establishing a government, so that he never was, properly speaking, a subject of that monarch. He is rather to be considered as the representative of an opposite interest of the country, that of the northern highlanders and the Norwegians; and his welfare with the gracious Duncan seems, therefore, to have been as fair as any welfare of that age ever was.

Taking the poetical story in its details, the recounter with the witches shrink into a very simple matter. The earlier writers speak of it only as a dream, in which Macbeth imagined himself as addressed by the three Fates. The incident is thus related by honest Andrew Wayton of Linchleven, who wrote about 1390:

"At night he thought in his dreaming,
That sitting he was beside the king
At a seat in hunting; he saw
Till his leish had grown hounds twas.
He thought, while he was so sitting,
He saw three women by gangand; t
And three women than thought he
Three were sisters maist like to be.
The first he heard say, gangand by,
'Lo yonder the Thane of Cromarty!
The toth woman said again,
'Of Moray yonder I see the Thane.'
The third thus said, 'I see the King.'
All this he heard in his dreaming."

Thane, it will be understood is a Saxon term for his Gaelic maormor; and it may be further explained, that the maormorship of Moray is what is implied in the term 'Thane of Cawdor' the seat of the Moray chief being at Calder, in the county of Nairn. We can easily believe that the above story had a foundation in truth, and such a dream really did help to impel Macbeth to attempt gaining the kingdom; for incidents of this kind were among the motives of great actions in that and subsequent ages. But this admission certainly fixed no probability upon Macbeth.

The story has, however been greatly exaggerated in the course of time; and, for one thing, the whole portion of it referring to Banquo is a fiction. There was no such person; therefore he never was murdered. And at the time when he is represented as learning that he was to be the progenitor of the house of Stuart, the actual ancestor of that family was living in Normandy, under the name of Fitzallen, not even dreaming of ever possessing a foot of land in Britain.

The death of Duncan, instead of a private murder, was, we have seen, the overthrow of a rival in battle. The scene of this fight is not precisely known. The old chronicles say it took place at Bothgowan, which George Chalmers fixes near Elgin; but it was probably near Iverness, where there actually is a cairn, or heap of stones, called Clachan Donaichie (that is, Duncan's cairn), implying probably the scene of his death. The whole story of the reception of Duncan by Macbeth at his castle, the killing of the king during the night, and the concealment of the murder by the slaughter of the two servants, which Shakspeare derived from Hollingshead, is a transposition from a different period of history, being a recital of the actual circumstances attending the death of a King Duff, in the castle of Eorest, about a century before, the governor of the castle being the murderer.

Thus the greatest stain of all which rests on the memory of Macbeth vanishes in a moment. That such stains should have ever attached to the memory of an innocent man, may create surprise; but we should remember that he was immediately succeeded by a hostile dynasty, whose interest it would be to blacken him as much as possible, and whom writers would of course be disposed to flatter by saying all the evil they could of the deceased monarch.

This influence, however, has not been able to suppress the fact that Macbeth was a successful ruler, and for the greater part of his reign extremely popular. Buchanan describes him as "a man of penetrating genius of an exalted spirit, and delighting in great affairs." Perhaps this character was partly owing to a set of wise laws which he was then believed to have framed, but the authenticity of which has long been given up. Yet that he was a sagacious and vigorous ruler for his time, there is no room to doubt.

It is curious that the only certain document proceeding from this supposed murderer and his "fiend queen," should be a deed in which they are associated in conferring a piece of territory upon the peaceful Gudee clergy of Lochleven. Such, however, is the progress of error, that, three hundred years later, a priest of this very establishment, probably deriving his support in part from the gift of Macbeth, gravely records a story which makes out the devil to have been the natural father of that prince.

The circumstances attending the conclusion of Macbeth's career are given

by Shakspeare as he found them in the chronicles. The story of the rearing of a castle on Dunsinann hill, the flight of Macduff, and slaughter of his family, the conversation of Macduff with Malcolm in England, the march of the English Army to Birnam, the moving wood, and the attack on Dunsinann, are all stated by Andrew Wynton, who, however, represents Macbeth as retreating to the north and being slain at Lumphannan, in Aberdeenshire, which there can be no doubt, was the true scene of his death. Wynton speaks of Macbeth alone whose

In fannom freith had great fay.
That is, had great faith in fantastic superstitions. And he describes him as at last defying the knight by whom he was first overtaken with the taunt, that no man born of woman could harm him, to which the assailant makes the answer which Shakspeare puts into the mouth of Macduff. It must be admitted that all these particulars, which Shakspeare has fixed in our minds like the tenets of a creed are at the best doubtful.

It is, however, ascertained that Macbeth met his enemies in battle near Dunsinann Castle, where that part of which remains entire is six feet high and discovered with an immense mass of ruins, the height of which must have been considerable. A road, which takes the hill on the northeast, ascends in a slanting direction, crosses the esplanade and enters the rampart and area on the south-southwest. Another road which was cut through the rock, went up from the Long Man's Grave in a straight direction, and enters the centre of the esplanade. The interior area of the fortress was of an oval form, 210 feet in length and 130 breadth.

A section was made across the top of the hill by Dr. Playfair, and flags, charcoal, and bones of several species of animals, were discovered, but no appearance of any building. Having penetrated seven yards horizontally into the mass of stones and rubbish which composed the rampart, part of the wall was discovered quite entire, nicely built of large stones bedded in clay or mortar."

Going past.
Of Angus or Glamis Macbeth never was maormor.

Near this there actually was, thirty years ago, a smith's shop, which, in Gaelic, would be called Bothgowan. As the smith's shops, or bothies, are usually of very old standing in the Highlands, it is possible that this particular spot may have been the site of such an establishment for several centuries.

THE LOST PIE.—It was many years ago that a middle aged matron and her maiden sister, on the approach of Thanksgiving, were in the midst of preparation for the ancient festival. It was late in the evening; the spacious kitchen seemed all too small for the vast quantities of delicacies it contained. Often had the various kind of pies been drawn from the ample oven, and deposited on dressers, table and chairs, in admirable confusion. From early morning to a late hour had the mistress of all this good cheer been laboring hard, and she now threw her wearied form into the great arm chair, to view her treasures. She carefully counted her pies, and lo! one was gone! She knew the capacity of the oven, and how many times it had been filled, and her arithmetic told her, by figures that will not lie, that a pie was missing. She counted again, and the wanderer could not be found. She was troubled, perplexed and nervous.

She had made the discovery that the missing pie was a pumpkin pie—of extra size—a particular pie—all ornamented with scalloped rim and various indentations with spoon a thimble; in a word, it was the pie which was to grace the centre of the table at the Thanksgiving feast. No wonder, then, that our good lady grew warm with agitation, and it seemed to her that an unwelcome warmth also came from the seat of the arm chair. She rose to scream for Becky, the maidens sister, and opened the way to a full knowledge of the catastrophe. It seems that the good lady had placed the unlucky pie in the great arm chair, and unfortunately threw herself into her accustomed seat. When she arose, the horror struck Becky saw the yellow treasure sticking to the ample rear of the good matron like a "Poor Man's Plaster," and her hysterical screams made known the discovery to her astonished sister.

TO PRESERVE EGGS.

The high price, and scarcity of eggs during the winter season, render it an object of importance to preserve them from decay during the season of abundance, for that of scarcity. This, like every thing else, is a very easy matter when we know how to accomplish it, and difficult when we are ignorant of the mode of effecting it.

The shells of the eggs are porous, and by being long kept, the fluid contents evaporate gradually, and that in proportion as the temperature of the weather is increased; the vacant space occasioned by the evaporation is immediately filled with air, and produces decomposition or rotteness. Now, if the air can be prevented from entering through the shell, the egg will remain sound for an indefinite period—for decomposition cannot take place without air. Beaumont tried various eggs to preserve them; but he found that the cheapest and most effectual method was to apply oil or grease, with which they were rubbed, or into which they were dipped. The transpiration of matter from the egg, was proved to be as effectually stopped by the thinnest layer of fat, as by a thick coating, so that no sensible vestige be left on the surface of the shell. All sorts of fat,

grease or oil, were found well adapted to preserve eggs; they were preserved for nine months, as fresh as on the day which they were laid. Other plans for accomplishing the same purpose might be stated, but the above is so simple, cheap, and effectual, that it is deemed unnecessary to name them.

STORY OF A BACKLOG.—Our nearest neighbor was Squire Peleg Sanford; well the old squire, and all his family was all of them the most passionate folks that ever lived, when they chose; and then they could keep in their temper, and be as cool as other times as cucumbers. One night, old Peleg, as he was called, told his son Gucom, a boy of fourteen years old, to go and bring a backlog for the fire; 'A backlog, you know, Squire, in a wood fire, is always the biggest stick that one can find or carry.—It takes a stout junk of a boy to lift one.

'Well, as soon as Gucom goes to fetch the log, the old Squire drags forward the coals, and fixed the fire so to leave a bed for it, and stands by ready to fit it in its place. Presently in comes Gucom with a little cat stick, no bigger than his leg, and throws it on. Uncle Peleg got so mad, he never said a word, but seized his ridin' whip, and gave him a 'most awful whipping.' He tanned his hide properly for him, you may depend. 'Now,' said he, 'go sir, and bring in a proper backlog.'

Gucom was clear grit as well as the old man, for he was a chip of the old block, and no mistake; so out he goes without so much as sayin' a word, but instead of goin' to the wood pile, he walks off altogether, and staid away eight years, till he was one-and-twenty and his own master. Well, as soon as he was a man grown and lawfully on his own hook, he took it into his head one day he'd go home and see his old father and mother agin'; for they didn't know whether he was dead or not, never having heard one blessed word from him all that time.—When he arrived at the old house, daylight was down and the lights lit, and as he passed the keepin'-room winder, he looked in, and there was old Squire sittin' in the same chair he was eight years afore, when he ordered in the backlog and gave him such an unmerciful whippin'. So what does Gucom do but stops at the wood pile, and picks up a hugeaceous log, (for he had grow'd to be a 'most a thunderin' big feller then,) and openin' the door, he march in and lays it down on the hearth, and then lookin' up, said he—

'Father I've brought you the backlog.'

'Uncle Peleg was struck up all of a heap; he couldn't believe his eyes, that that great six-footer was the boy he had cow-hided, and he couldn't believe his ears when he heard him call him father; a man from the grave couldn't have surprised him more, he was quite unfilled and bedumbed for a minute. But came too right off, and was liced down to a freezin' pint in no time.

'What did you say?' says he.

'That I have brought you in the backlog, sir, you sent me out for.'

'Well, then, you've been a confounded long time a fetchin' it,' says he; 'that's all I can say. Draw the coals forward, put it on, and then go to bed.'

'Now that's fact, Squire; I know the parties myself—and that's what I do call coolness—and no mistake!'

Sam Slick.

From the National Intelligencer.

Agricultural Improvements in the United States.

It is a sign indicative of cheering results, that, in addition to the number of journals established within a few years for the express purpose of promoting agricultural improvement, departments are allotted now in various other journals to the dissemination of intelligence immediately affecting the welfare of the farming community—the leading interest of the nation. The Boston Courier has usually devoted much attention to agricultural matters; and it is no disparagement to the ability which characterizes all departments of that well known newspaper, to say that none of its columns are probably read with more interest and profit than those devoted to "Geonopies," to use the comprehensive term applied by the worthy editor to that department of his journal. Other interests scarcely less worthy of note, might be mentioned; though, it must be confessed, the public interest would be largely promoted by greater attention to the subject on the part of our editorial brotherhood generally.

These remarks are induced now by the fact that the conductor of the New York Albion has established an agricultural department in his paper. The wide circulation of the Albion in Europe and the British Provinces, as well as the United States, renders more important the act of deference to the agricultural interest—important alike in all countries whatever the form of government may be. Dr. Bartlett, the editor of the Albion, has engaged Mr. Skinner, of Washington, to devote attention to this branch of the journal; and the few hours that can be spared from his official duties will be employed in this and other efforts to pro-

mote the agricultural interest, for advancing which Mr. S. has labored through a large portion of his life. To show the character of this particular movement on the part of the editor of the Albion, the following extract is taken from the article in which the new arrangement is announced.

"Agriculture, is now fast becoming a science, is a study of great value and importance to man. In England, where the superficial extent is remarkably limited for the myriads of inhabitants supported, is pursued with 'unexampled vigor and skill; and the results are such as to awaken in other countries a kindred thirst for the same knowledge. But in no country have the plans and discoveries of England been imitated and acted upon to so great an extent as in the United States. The study of agriculture and horticulture is beginning to be taken up by others besides farmers, and men of leisure as well as practical persons of science are turning their attention to this useful and honorable pursuit. As, then, British publications are teeming with matter on this subject, and as a desire to obtain this matter is very extensively felt in this country, we have resolved to devote a part of our columns to the dissemination of this information; but in order that this may be done skilfully and perfectly, we have availed ourselves of the services of J. S. SKINNER, Esq. formerly of the Baltimore farmer, to conduct this department. Mr. SKINNER is a gentleman well known to the public, is so enthusiastic in the cause of agriculture, and came so early into the field as its protector and advocate, that we feel sure the task could not be confided in better hands. We are confirmed in this opinion from his numerous writings, and may further state in proof of his zeal that he established the first agricultural journal published in the United States."

In one of his communications, Mr. Skinner assures his friends that he is "animated by the same zeal in the cause of agricultural improvement which prompted him more than a quarter of a century ago to establish the first periodical dictated to American husbandry."

"Friends of the plough," he exclaims, "what a change has come o'er the spirit of our dream! since that epoch! Not only was doubtful experiment crowned with success, but many other and abler journals have been annually coming into existence all over the country, begetting an appetite for disquisitions on every branch of rural industry, which, far from being satisfied with abundant supplies, seems to increase by what it feeds upon, until happily it has come to pass to those who are destined to earn their livelihood by tilling the soil, now more and more regard their pursuit as one which demands not only a close observation of field practice and of the actual results, but an active exercise of the mind, to the end that by a better knowledge of all the principles involved, and agencies by which they are produced, these results may be controlled and modified."

With these views, it will be equally the duty and the pleasure of the undersigned to encourage and yet more widely diffuse the sentiment that agriculture and horticulture are in truth connected, as well in theory as in practice, with various in interesting studies; and that in proportion as we advance in a knowledge of all the sciences akin to those pursuits, laws of nature hitherto untaught will be revealed, and new objects, infinitely variegated and interesting, be disclosed, over which the practice man passes without perception or relish, just as the blind man in the country, so much to be commiserated, is insensible to the glories of our autumnal scenery, and all the varied beauties of creation. Such is the melancholy contrast between the unenlightened and the cultivated agriculturist.

"The arrangement for an agricultural department in the Albion newspaper cannot affect injuriously the interests of any of the many agricultural publications now circulated in America. The editor would decline any and all connexions that might thus encroach on the patronage justly due to his co-laborers in the wide field of agricultural improvement."

"The Albion circulates not merely among a large circle of American friends, but also among the natives of Great Britain—in Europe as well as in the United States—and, as a country can in no way be better known than by its agriculture, it is conceived that much good may be effected by familiarizing its foreign readers with the condition of agriculture in America, furnishing facts showing how and where the foreigner may best promote his own good by and advance the interests of his adopted country, when 'settling' with his family either in the new or the old States of the American Confederacy. So far from desiring to trench upon the well deserved patronage of the regular agricultural journals, it is repeated the editor is well persuaded that the interest awakened by the agricultural articles of the 'Albion,' widely read as those articles will be over a large portion of the world, will contribute considerably towards turning attention to the American agricultural journals as the best sources of practical and exact information concerning the condition and prospects of the industrial interests and capacities of the people and the soil of the United States."